

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Costa Rica

**Post:** San Jose

### **Wine seduces the Costa Rican market**

**Report Categories:**

Wine

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**Report Highlights:**

In 2010, annual wine consumption per capita in Costa Rica will reach 2 liters.

**General Information:**

Trends in wine consumption have changed dramatically in Costa Rica over the last decade. Widely marketed to appeal as an attractive, charming and seductive drink, it has more followers than ever in Costa Rica. Wine experts have pushed consumption and distribution and it is now very much in fashion in Costa Rica. When invited to a dinner or to meet with friends, everyone brings a bottle of wine, compared to ten years ago when people typically brought beer, rum or vodka.

The per capita wine consumption estimate for this year will reach two liters of wine. While this is low compared with the Italian market, which averages 60 liters per capita, or even Argentina with 30 liters, there is a lot of room to grow. When taken into consideration that ten years ago the wine consumption only reached 0.3 liters per capita, it appears that the wine sector has real potential to develop in Costa Rica.

The potential market in Costa Rica is roughly 1.2 million of people, between tourists and nationals. The importation of wine to Costa Rica is approximately 500,000 cases per year.

**Wine touches tourism and influences local consumption**

At present, wine is flowing into hotels. Tourism has generated a demand for more varieties and high quality wines. As a consequence, the domestic consumer has been exposed to even more products and results in regular clients who want to be more involved in the wine world.

There are different wine tastings on a weekly basis in Costa Rica organized by distributors, importers and wine clubs. Restaurants' wine lists are growing day by day with exclusive and upscale wines.

In this market, quality is just as important, if not more, than quantity of selection. Consumers here demonstrate a refined and sophisticated taste in world wines. A marketing study carried out in Costa Rican supermarkets indicates that the average Costa Rican citizen is buying wines between \$8 and \$20 per bottle. This is an important figure if we consider that the U.S. market buys wines on average of \$25 per bottle.

Another issue that has influenced increased consumption of wine is the "health issue", since these days it is widely known that moderate consumption of wine has proven health benefits.

But the wine flows here because it is a different drink, interesting and captivating. It is remarkable that new wine consumers constantly enter the market with an interest to continue learning more and more about the wine world.